

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 7479

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, OREP (EILBERG, JOSHUA), UR, US

SUBJECT: CODEL EILBERG VISIT

FOR EUR/SOV AND H

1. SUMMARY. CODEL EILBERG IS HAVING SUCCESSFUL TRIP. CODEL HAS MET WITH SOVIET JEWISH ACTIVISTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS DISSIDENTS, BUT AT SAME TIME, HAS HAD GOOD MEETINGS AT OFFICIAL LEVEL ARRANGED BY SOVIETS. JEWISH EMIGRATION HAS BEEN MAIN TOPIC OF DISCUSSION, WITH CODEL GETTING STANDARD SOVIET LINE, BUT FINDING IT POSSIBLE TO RAISE CONCERN OF U.S. PUBLIC ON ISSUE. END SUMMARY.

2. CONSIDERING NATURE OF VISIT AND PRIMARY CONCERN OF DELEGATION, CODEL EILBERG IS BEING EXTRAORDINARILY WELL TREATED BY SOVIETS. THUS, WHILE CODEL HAS MET WITH JEWISH ACTIVISTS IN LENINGRAD (EVENING MAY 25) AND MOSCOW (EVENING MAY 27) AND WITH DISSIDENT ACADEMICIAN SAKHAROV (EVENING MAY 28), IT HAS ALSO HAD NUMBER OF USEFUL MEETINGS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS ARRANGED BY MFA AND INTOURIST. WHEN CODEL WAS RECEIVED AT LENINGRAD OVIR MAY 26, AND AT ALL-UNION OVIR IN MOSCOW (DEPUTY CHIEF OVCHINNIKOV) MAY 27, GROUP QUERIED OFFICIALS ON EMIGRATION LAWS AND PROCEDURES AND PRESENTED LISTS OF SOVIET JEWS AND NON-JEWS
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WISHING TO LEAVE USSR PERMANENTLY OR FOR VISITS.

CODEL ALSO VISITED MENTAL HOSPITAL AND PSYCHO-NEUROLOGICAL INSTITUTE IN LENINGRAD. AT SUPREME SOVIET MAY 27 GROUP HELD DISCUSSION WITH A.N. SHITIKOV, CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF UNION, AND WITH OTHER SOVIET OFFICIALS, INCLUDING USA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR ARBATOV, PRAVDA COMMENTATOR ZHUKOV, IMEMO DIRECTOR INOZEMTSEV, LITGAZ EDITOR CHAKOVSKIY AND SUPREME COURT CHAIRMAN SMIRNOV. CODEL HAD MEETINGS ON MAY 28 AT USSR PROCURATOR'S OFFICE (DEPUTY PROCURATOR MALYAROV) WHERE ISSUE OF SUSPECTED NAZI WAR CRIMINALS IN U.S. WAS RAISED, SOVIET SUPREME COURT (SMIRNOV), AND AT USA INSTITUTE (ARBATOV, SHERSHNEV, ZHURKIN AND ABOUT 15 OTHER LEADING STAFF MEMBERS), WHERE SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRATION WAS MAIN DISCUSSION TOPIC. IN ADDITION, CONGRESSMAN DODD MET WITH DEPUTY MINISTER OF FISHERIES ZHIGALOV.

3. EMBOFFS ACCOMPANIED CODEL ON ALL OFFICIAL CALLS, WITH EXCEPTION OF MEETING AT SUPREME COURT. EMBOFFS HAVE NOT BEEN PRESENT DURING MEETINGS WITH ACTIVISTS AND DISSIDENTS, WHICH WERE ARRANGED PERSONALLY BY CODEL STAFF MEMBERS AND THROUGH MOSCOW-BASED U.S. CORRESPONDENTS. CODEL DEPARTED FOR KIEV EVENING MAY 29 ACCOMPANIED BY EMBASSY CONTROL OFFICER.

4. CODEL SEEMS GENUINELY PLEASED WITH VISIT THUS FAR, WITH MAIN POINTS OF DISSATISFACTION ARISING FROM INABILITY TO ARRANGE MEETING BETWEEN CONGRESSMEN MEZVINSKY AND AGMIN/POLITBURO MEMBER POLYANSKIY (WE WERE TOLD HE WAS NOT AVAILABLE DUE TO PREPARATIONS FOR A TRIP) AND TO SET UP GROUP MEETING WITH INTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER SHCHELOKOV (WHO WAS SAID TO BE OUT OF TOWN). CONGRESSWOMAN HOLTZMAN EXPRESSED DESIRE TO VISIT VLADIMIR PRISON, WHERE DISSIDENTS CONFINED, BUT THIS GOT LOST IN THE SHUFFLE. GENERAL IMPRESSION OF CODEL IS THAT THEY ARE GETTING BROAD RANGE OF VIEWS ON EMIGRATION QUESTION, BUT THAT OFFICIAL SOVIETS ARE REPLYING IN VAGUE GENERALITIES AND ARE EXPECTEDLY LESS THAN FRANK ON QUESTION OF REFUSALS, HARASSMENT AND REGULARITY OF PROCEDURES.

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5. ON JEWISH EMIGRATION, SOVIET OFFICIAL LINE HAS BEEN TO DISCLAIM ANY DISCRIMINATION OR HARASSMENT OF APPLICANTS AND TO CLAIM THAT DESIRE FOR EMIGRATION AMONG JEWS IS STEADILY DROPPING. IN TYPICALLY SLICK PERFORMANCE AT USA INSTITUTE, ARBATOV TOLD GROUP THAT THEY SHOULD STUDY RUSSIAN AND SOVIET TRADITIONS IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND SOVIET SENSITIVITIES ABOUT EMIGRANTS, WHO WERE TRADITIONALLY CONSIDERED TO BE "TRAITORS."

THE REVOLUTION, HE SAID, HAD STRUCK OUT AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM AND HAD SUCCEEDED IN GIVING EQUAL RIGHTS TO JEWS. ONLY RECENTLY HAD SOVIET STATE BEGUN TO FEEL CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO PERMIT LIBERAL EMIGRATION AND NOW JEWS, EXCEPT FOR THOSE WHO POSSESSED "SECRET" INFORMATION OR HAD FAMILY OBLIGATIONS IN USSR, WERE BEING ALLOWED TO LEAVE FREELY. IF THERE WAS HARASSMENT OF APPLICANTS, THIS WAS PROBABLY DUE TO UNDERSTANDABLE "EMOTIONS" OF PEOPLE ON LOCAL LEVEL BUT WAS NOT OFFICIAL POLICY. ARBATOV SAID NUMBERS OF EMIGRANTS WERE LARGE IN FIRST YEARS BECAUSE MOST LEFT FOR RELIGIOUS, ECONOMIC OR CULTURAL REASONS AND MANY HAD "BOURGEOIS" ATTITUDES. NOW, HOWEVER, THOSE JEWS WERE GONE, AND GREAT MAJORITY OF REST DID NOT WANT TO LEAVE. ARBATOV EXPECTED THAT NUMBERS "WILL DROP SHARPLY," AS A RESULT. OTHER USA INSTITUTE STAFF MEMBERS CHIMED IN THAT U.S. CONGRESS WAS MAKING TOO MUCH OF A FEW CASES AND EXPRESSED OPINION THAT REAL REASON FOR ACTIVITIES OF MOST STRIDENT U.S. SUPPORTERS OF JEWISH EMIGRATION WAS TO UNDERMINE DETENTE.

6. ON TRADE-EMIGRATION LINKAGE, ARBATOV SAID THAT CONGRESS MISUNDERSTOOD SOVIET MOTIVATIONS. SOVIETS WANTED TRADE WITH U.S. BUT WERE NOT WILLING TO BE PRESSED AND VIEWED TRADE MORE IN POLITICAL CONTEXT OF SPURRING DETENTE BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. IN ANY CASE, SOVIETS WERE NOT HUNGRY FOR U.S. CREDITS AND TRADE SINCE THEY WERE DOING QUITE WELL ON THIS SCORE WITH OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES. ARBATOV REJECTED CLAIM THAT SOVIETS DESPERATELY NEEDED U.S. TECHNOLOGY, SAYING THAT IT WAS MORE NECESSARY FOR COUNTRY TO COME UP WITH BETTER WAYS OF TRANSFERRING ITS OWN CONSIDERABLE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE TO INDUSTRIAL SECTOR THAN TO LOOK FOR HELP FROM OUTSIDE.
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7. MEETING WAS HELD IN FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE WITH U.S. CONGRESSMEN OFTEN FINDING THEMSELVES IN UNACCUSTOMED DEFENSIVE POSITION IN VIEW OF ARBATOV'S AND OTHERS' EFFECTIVE AND WELL-PRACTICED PRESENTATIONS. CODEL

FELT, HOWEVER, THAT IT HAD MADE ITS POINTS ABOUT CONCERNS OF U.S. PUBLIC IN AREA OF EMIGRATION, WHILE STRESSING SUPPORT OF MAJORITY OF AMERICAN PUBLIC FOR BETTER U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS.

8. MORE COMPLETE REPORT ON VISIT WILL FOLLOW.
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